

A randomised controlled trial to assess the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of alternative treatments to Inhibit VEGF in Age-related choroidal Neovascularisation (IVAN)

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Declared competing interests of authors: Usha Chakravarthy, Simon P Harding and Andrew J Lotery are principal investigators of trials sponsored by Novartis, the manufacturers of ranibizumab. Usha Chakravarthy has attended and been remunerated for attendance at advisory boards for Novartis, Bayer, Neovista, Oraya, Allergan, and Bausch and Lomb, and her employing institution has received payments from Novartis, Bayer, Neovista, Oraya, Alcon and Pfizer. Chris A Rogers has received an honorarium from Novartis for a lecture. The employing institutions of Susan Downes and Andrew J Lotery have received payments from Novartis. Susan Downes and Andrew J Lotery have received honoraria from Novartis for lectures. Andrew J Lotery has attended and been remunerated for attendance at advisory boards for Novartis and Bayer. Barnaby C Reeves has received a fee for teaching from Janssen-Cilag and is a member of the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment commissioning board and the NIHR Systematic Reviews Programme Advisory Group. James Raftery is a member of the NIHR Editorial Board and the NIHR Journals Library Editorial Group. He was previously Director of the Wessex Institute and Head of the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre.

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Plain English summary

The IVAN trial

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Plain English summary

The study aimed to compare two drugs (bevacizumab and ranibizumab), and two dosing intensities (injections monthly or intermittently), for treating wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Twenty-three hospitals took part. Broadly, we sought to include patients with wet AMD in the study eye, who were older than 50 years. Each participant was allocated one of the drugs and one of the dosing intensities, creating four combinations. The main outcome was the number of letters read on an eye chart using the study eye. Other aspects of eyesight, the appearance of the affected part of the eye, possible harms of treatment, patient-reported outcomes, and resources used to treat participants were measured.

The average improvement in eyesight was very similar with either drug. Monthly treatment was slightly better than intermittent treatment. Quality of life and treatment satisfaction did not differ by drug or dosing intensity. When our results were combined with those of other trials, there was no difference in eyesight outcomes between drugs, but giving treatment monthly was slightly better. Hospitalisations and deaths during the trial occurred equally often with either drug but less often with monthly than intermittent treatment. Ranibizumab was 15 times more expensive than bevacizumab.

Our findings show that the two drugs improve eyesight by a very similar amount and that monthly treatment improves eyesight slightly more than intermittent treatment. Safety appeared to be slightly better when treatment was given monthly. Ranibizumab was not cost-effective compared with bevacizumab. More work is being done on the safety aspects of these drugs and treatment schedules.

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